

## **Birds & the Bees & Eleven by Frankiebee89**

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**Summary:** Steve is babysitting when Eleven asks an uncomfortable question.

# 1. Chapter 1

"Steve, what is... Sex?"

This is not what I wanted to deal with today. El is a great kid and all, and she's super easy to babysit. Most of the time, she's watching television - the kid has an unhealthy obsession with soap operas, and I'm not too big to admit that I'm sorta hooked on them now, too. I've been coming around Hopper's for most of summer vacation, hanging out with El when no one else can. Mrs. Byers works all the time, Jonathan and Nancy are busy sucking face and making intense eyes at each other wherever the hell they are. I used to waste my days hanging out with Tommy and Carol, bullshitting and getting drunk or high or both and riding around Hawkins. Parties. Girls. Now my life is filled with the daytime television targeted at stay-at-home-mom's and old people. It's boring, but it's comforting in that nothing changes and no one dies. I don't have mullet-wearing punks trying to jump me, I don't have demons from alternate dimensions trying to kill me.

Nope, just fourteen year old girls who have yet to grasp the concept of what's appropriate and what's not.

Literally, the things that come out of this girl's mouth astound me. Like the time she asked me what a boner was - *"Lucas said that just because Mike has a boner for me, doesn't mean I get to pick what we do all the time,"* - or the time she asked, with her big innocent brown eyes and the strange, child-like wonder and curiosity that just totally slays me - *"Max said that you're a pussy. But isn't that a cat?"* Why couldn't she be interested in world politics? Or pop culture? Honestly, I could probably help a lot with the whole crazy-curly-hair thing she's got going on. Take her to the mall, get her out of all the flannel and overalls and Chucks. But whatever, the kid grew up in a labratory with a number instead of a name. Who am I to judge?

I choke on the soda I'm drinking when she asks, and immediately my eyes well up with tears and I wheeze. She sits back, startled, and her eyes go wide as the Eggos she's obsessed with as I pound on my chest and try to get my air back.

"Jesus," I mutter, under my breath. I've learned that she's quite

sensitive and takes tone better than words, so I know it's important to be careful when it comes to *how* I speak to her. The time I got after her for making a mess in the kitchen is a glaring reminder, as she'd used her freaky mind-powers to slam her bedroom door and the lightbulb overhead in the kitchen exploded into a million pieces. When I can finally breathe properly, Eleven tilts her head to the side, silently questioning whether I'm ok or waiting for me to explain.

*How do I explain sex?* It's phenomenal. Feels better than anything on Earth. Especially with Nancy, her small body beneath mine and so eager and responsive. Like no other girl I've ever been with. But she's not mine, and the reminder twists my stomach and I feel my mouth turn down with distaste. Eleven is studying me like I'm some kind of puzzle she's trying to put together (so far, we're working through a thousand piece number of some pretty but boring scenery, and it sits on a card table in the corner with the edges all put together but the inside a mess of pink and purple and red and green confusion).

On one hand, I want to tell her all of that - that sex is natural, and beautiful, and nothing in the world compares to being buried inside the wet heat of a beautiful girl who wants it just as badly as you do. But, she's fourteen, and she's got that strangely intense relationship with Mike, Nancy's little brother. I mean, I was having sex at fifteen, but Mike's a total nerd who plays Dungeons and Dragons and acts way less mature than I was at his age. I was already going to senior parties when I was a freshmen. I was dating girls and getting my hands up sweaters with frightening ease. I highly doubt he's got the balls to put the moves on El, no matter how much he may *want* to. And I'm certain he does, because I see the way he looks at her like she's the only person in the room - or the *planet*. It's all hand-holding and shy smiles and the silence stretching between them that seems to be filled with more than words. I don't get it. I probably never will.

I'd like to think that Nancy and I had something like that...

"Sex is a biological urge to procreate," I say instead of any of my thoughts. This, at least, is true. It's scientific and Hopper *can't* murder me for corrupting his daughter. She could see this on the science channel, or in one of the biology textbooks procured from the library or stolen from one of the classrooms in Hawkins High. Glancing at El, I realize she has no clue what *that* means. Sighing, I sink further into

the old, musty sofa and run my hands through my beautifully cultivated hair. It is my pride and joy.

"Pro-cre-ate?" Eleven asks, cocking her head in a way that reminds me of a dog. Eyebrows knit together.

"Have babies," I supply. Then, because it's obvious that she's still sorta foggy, I realize I'm going to have to talk the birds and the bees with Eleven. This was not how I wanted my day to go.

"Moms and Dads." Eleven nods, like this makes all the sense in the world. "Moms and Dads have sex and that makes babies."

*OK, yeah. Maybe this won't be so bad.*

But then my big mouth gets the better of me. "Well, not *just* moms and dads. And not *just* to have babies. Sex is fun, and it feels good, so sometimes people who like each other just do it for that." I am *not* thinking of Nancy Wheeler and the sway of her slender hips, her tiny waist, the way it feels to have her ass grinding against me while she -

"So, Mike and I should sex." Eleven nods, like her mind is made up, then turns her attention away from me and back to the small television set where someone is professing their love or dramatically announcing their terminal cancer or getting kidnapped.

"Um, no. I definitely didn't say *that*."

"Mike and I like each other." She shrugs one shoulder, blinks and the television switches channels. I am certain I will never get used to that.

"Yeah, well you're kids - sex is for adults."

Slowly, she turns her head and lifts one arched eyebrow at me, challenging. "You are not adult." If she wasn't who she was - socially stunted, the Chief of Police's adopted daughter, girlfriend to my ex's little brother, friend of the group of misfit kids who have seemed to adopted me - I might have thought she was being a bitch. But that's just El, and she's blunt as fuck, and she's not *wrong*. Deep down, she just wants to be like the rest of us, to understand. Living in a cage her entire life, being experimented on and basically forced into a hell

dimension where things were trying to kill her - well, its totally understandable that she's far from normal. The fact that her group of friends are also over-imaginative dipshits that don't know how to stay out of trouble or *alive* doesn't help matters.

"Well, I never said I had sex, either." *Ha, gotcha kid.*

"You said it feels good. You have." *Well shit.*

El stands and ambles across the cabin, which is basically one big room save for the bathroom and her bedroom, into the kitchen area where she opens the fridge, stares for a moment, then closes it again. "What does sex *mean*, Steve? How do you sex?"

Listen, I get it. She wants to know - surely, and grossly, she has hormones burning through her pubescent body as strongly as every other young teenager. And she has no idea what it means, or why its happening, and I kinda feel bad for her. Imagine waking up with a hard dick and no idea what the hell it means - certainly, it would be terrifying. I just don't think *I'm* the person for this conversation, because I am an eighteen year old guy that is hired to babysit. I'm not her parent or Mrs. Byers or some other female that could much more easily relate all of this pertinent information. It would be much easier if a demogorgon smashed through the wall and swallowed me whole with its mouth-face.

"Sex is - it's something - well," I scratch my head and search for the right words, "it's something you do with someone you love, like I said. It's for - when you're *older* -"

"How older?" Her eyes narrow and I know she's testing me.

"Old enough to drive a car, at least." There - that buys a couple years. I settle in, feeling a pinch more confident. It would be so much easier to have this conversation with Dustin, who eats up everything I tell him like gospel. "So, when you and the partner of your choosing, who loves and respects you..." *Yeah, that's good shit*, I congratulate myself. "Well, remember when I told you what a boner is?"

Her cheeks flood with color and she nods, biting her lip. She is still hanging onto the handle to the door of the fridge, hanging on my

every word.

"Ok, so the boner goes into the vagina. You know what that is...?"

"P-pussy," she says, like she is testing the word out.

"Yes, exactly. Um, and so the boner goes into the pussy..." I am blushing now too, which is rare and uncomfortable, but we've made it this far and I just have to get it over with. "So yeah, boner plus pussy until everyone orgasms. And then you get pregnant. And then Hopper kills you."

A long silence stretches between us. I cross and uncross my legs, touch my hair, stare at her waiting for some kind of response. No one ever had this talk with me - I found a bunch of my dad's old Playboy's and kinda worked it out on my own from locker room talk and movies. Far more comprehensive and straightforward, and hopefully, because she doesn't say anything but comes back over to flop down on the other end of the sofa, it's over with. I'm not sure how much more my heart can take.

It seems like we are back to watching television. I try to relax, after a while, because she's chewing on her lip and staring at the screen and I sorta wonder if maybe I dreamed the whole conversation. I hope I did it right, and I try not to think of Nancy fucking Jonathan or El fucking Mike, because my brain might explode and that's the last thing we need. I'm finally starting to get back into the show - another soap but different station - when El's small voice breaks into my thoughts again.

"Steve, what is *orgasm*?"

*I'm going to kill myself.*

Thanks for reading! Might add chapters depending on the response. Let me know!

## 2. Chapter 2

I'm saved by a sudden rapping on the door, the secret knocks that Hopper and the kids have made up so El knows who to let in. The only person who gets a pass is Joyce, and she usually just knocks and shouts through the door until she's let in. Mrs Byers tries, very hard, to keep up with everything but she's a single mom with two kids, one of which is a girlfriend stealing odd-ball and the other is a danger magnet. You can't help but forgive her for not being able to keep it all together.

El jumps up and the locks are sliding open on their own, and no matter how many times I've witnessed this, it's just so damn cool. She might be awkward and she might put me in an early grave, but she's pretty impressive and quite lovable. It's obvious that she has them - the boys, the Chief, Joyce and Nancy, wrapped around her finger. Part of me thinks it has to do with the whole saving-us-all thing, but I know that Nancy has a soft spot too because of Barb.

Bullshit. It's all bullshit. No, Steve, do not think of that fateful night when everything when slip-sliding down hill like a fucking avalanche. Nope, not gonna remember Nancy's drunken rant or her big eyes or the way her shirt clung wetly to her body as she told me how she really felt. Fucking hell, this day started so normally and now I want to put my head in the oven.

"Mike," Eleven says, her voice soft and breathy like he was her fucking savior and it had been years rather than hours since last she saw the scrawny, freckled kid. They embrace and then Dustin Henderson, my new shadow, is pushing past them into the cabin and rolling his eyes at me.

"Sup, Harrington?" We high-five and I pretend not to notice the careful kissing happening at the door, the way Mike holds El's face between his large hands and her own on his skinny waist. I'm about to break it up when they separate, all lovey-eyes and pink cheeks, and Dustin makes a graphic gagging sound I can't help but laugh at.

He's definitely the remedy for my stress this afternoon.

"What are you guys up to?" Mike asks after clearing his throat and taking El's hand. I get it, sort of - he found her, gave her a home, showed her about friendship. But really, El? Mike Wheeler? He's all weird angles and eye-rolls, his voice gets squeaky when he gets into heavy debate, and the shade this kid can throw is legendary. But, like I said, I get it - there's something about the Wheeler siblings that just kinda catches you unaware and flips your world around.

"Steve was telling me about sex."

The silence that envelops the cabin is thick enough to cut, and I feel the boys turn to gape at me. Eleven is just smiling and looking at us, happy to have her friends, completely oblivious to the shift in the atmosphere.

"You what -"

"Dude."

Mike looks torn between wanting to throttle me and dying of embarrassment (which, I'm right there with him on that one), and Dustin is so amused his dimples are showing and his eyes are all squinting.

"Sex is good. It feels good," Eleven says, paraphrasing and out of context making me look like a total perve. Dustin guffaws and slaps his knee, and Mike's eyes are bugging out of his face in shock. "But we can't sex until we can drive." Eleven has the gall to sound disappointed.

"What - why..."

"Listen," I say, standing up and putting up my hands in a 'don't blame me' or 'calm the fuck down' sort of gesture. If Mike is anything like Nancy, I'm going to receive a verbal lashing that will have me tucking my tail and running off to nurse my wounded ego. "She asked what sex was. I told her it's for people in love, older people in love, and that it's for making babies. That's it, I swear to God." Why does it feel like I'm defending myself to a parent? These kids are only fourteen and here I am, trying not to get in trouble.



What happened to me? King Steve, ruler of the school and pussy magnet? People used to respect me in the halls of Hawkins High. People used to want to hang out with me all the time, invite me to parties and pray I would show because I was cool.

Now I give sex talks to children and babysit for fun. The fuck is wrong with me?

"And for fun. Because it feels good." Eleven just had to add that bit, didn't she? I sigh and run my fingers through my hair while trying to think of something, anything, to save myself from this incredibly awkward conversation. Where's a portal to the Upside Down when a guy really needs one?

"You know, I don't think it's really appropriate for you to be telling El this stuff," Wheeler says with narrowed eyes and one clenched fist - the other hand is interlaced with El's hand and her big brown eyes gaze up at him searchingly. Poor kid can't catch a break.

I feel for her again, my demeanor softening, because apparently I am a pussy now, like Max says.

"Mike," Eleven says, tugging his hand and drawing his attention to her. There's so many unspoken words between the two, captured in a simple look, and I have to look away. Dustin looks like he hit the jackpot, watching my demise with a silly grin. "Why are you..." She trails off, searching for the right word, while I think about stealing one of the Miller Lites out of Hopper's fridge. He's going to kill me anyway, right? "Mad?"

"Sex is private. It's between two people who love each other, and I don't think Steve is the right person to be giving you this information." Wheeler's tone with El is always soft and gentle, explanatory, but not in a way that makes her feel stupid. I can tell because she swallows his remarks with a solid nod of her curly head. No one says anything, and Dustin tries to suppress his smile, turning to the television.

"El, we have to introduce you to some better television. This stuff is shit." Thank you, Dustin, for saving my neck. Again.

"Not shit." Eleven turns up her nose and pulls Mike to the couch beside her, which he does without protest. I can tell that his mind is trying to process everything we've just spoken about. He has the same look on his pasty, freckled face that he gets during DD or when we are fighting inter dimensional creatures.

Eleven and Dustin playfully bicker and I pretend to focus on the puzzle in the corner, giving them space and recovering from the interrogation. My heart rate is settling back to normal when Mike asks a question I hadn't even thought of.

"Where did you even hear about sex?"

Please, just let it go, I mentally beg. Can't we just watch Fraggles Rock in peace? Why are these kids so damn nosy?

Surprisingly, Eleven blushes and looks away from Mike, bottom lip disappearing under neat white teeth. She's terrible at hiding her emotions most of the time, but around Mike it's totally impossible for her. I feel my eyebrow arch curiously now, wondering as well.

"Friends don't lie," Dustin quips, their weird little mantra or slogan or whatever.

She chews her lip, big eyes nervous as they meet Wheeler's. Fingers toy with the hem of her incredibly dorky cut-off shorts - again, I would love to take her shopping and buy her age appropriate and flattering clothing - and she shrugs. Speaking slowly, because she's struggling with the words or just nervous, I'm not sure, El finally says, "I heard Mrs Byers saying that she missed it. I wanted to get it for her -"

Good Lord. Please, someone strike me down. I'm praying for monsters or Billy Hargrove to appear so I have literally anything else to think about. Joyce is kinda hot, in a Mom way, but thinking about her missing sex does nothing but make my afternoon stranger and more uncomfortable.

The boys seem equally disturbed and share a look before Mike pats Eleven on the knee.

"That's sweet. El. But we definitely can't get that for her." Mike is blushing so red that I'm worried he might pass out, while Dustin is dumbfounded, for once.

"Jesus Christ Steve, what did you tell her?" Dustin asks, torn between humor and horror as I stare at the puzzle pieces in front of me with growing embarrassment. This whole day is weird as hell and I feel like I'm lacking the skills to deal with it. How does Hopper do it? Maybe she saves this crap just for me.

"Well, can we get her an orgasm then?"

Eleven seems proud and a little hopeful and I feel like sinking into the floor. Dustin and Mike look equally awkward and then El just has to ask, "We can get her an orgasm? Steve didn't tell me about that yet."

When Mike shoots me a look over his shoulder, I can't tell if it's grateful or murderous, so I shrug and say, "This one is all you, bud."

Let him handle it. She is his girlfriend, after all. It's only appropriate.

based on the stellar response I received, I decided to throw together a quick update. From my phone. That's how much I love you guys. If you'd like, follow me on tumblr at [elevenseggoobsession](#) - and please, review! it makes me write faster :)

### 3. Not Stupid

To my satisfaction, Mike's jaw practically unhinged as he stares at me, stupefied. Yeah, you little shit - see how well you do explaining the complexities of the human body and its reproductive function. To your telekinetic girlfriend.

Dustin, to my surprise, clears his throat and sits up a bit straighter. "An orgasm -"

"Dustin!" Mike's voice does the squeaking thing and he's blushing so hard his face is almost purple. "You aren't funny."

Eleven glances around at all of us like she's watching a tennis match. I think the confusion written on her pixie features is almost pitiful, but I'm done. I'm not going to get yelled at by the nerd herd for giving a sex talk, and I'm not gonna get murdered by Hopper. Or worse, thrown in the clank for indecent conversation with his daughter.

I highly doubt they have the proper hair products to maintain my personal look. And I'm way too pretty, I would get snatched up in a heartbeat.

"What, Mike? I'm just trying to help you out." Dustin tries to hide his now-toothy grin and looks quite a bit like a cat that's finally caught the canary. Obviously he's enjoying this far more than the rest of us. They're all heathens. I vow to never again hang out with them, in a supervising capacity or otherwise. The only one worth a damn is Max, and that's because she's a total badass. Annoying, bratty, and definitely kind of intimidating once you see her with a hypodermic needle and a bat, but she's a good kid and I trust her with my life.

I mean, I do now because I didn't have a choice after her stepbrother fucked me up.

But the rest of them? They can go make out with a pack of demodogs.

"I-I'm sorry," Eleven says, squeezing Mike's hand and sounding

genuinely regretful. Her big eyes shimmer with unshed tears and I want to groan and tug my hair out of frustration. I see Wheeler soften immediately and put an arm around her shoulders. Jesus, this kid has got to be the biggest, most whipped guy in Hawkins. Aside from maybe Hopper, but it's different when it's your kid. "I thought it would be n-nice to give Mrs Byers a g-g-g-" and then her face crumples, and she beats a path to her bedroom. The door slams with enough force to rattle the windows and we all freeze, just in case.

Then he turns on me.

"You're a real idiot, Steve Harrington." He sounds deadly serious but those words coming from a Wheeler makes my heart clench, remembering his sister saying the same thing a million times, and I roll my eyes heavenwards and pray for the strength to restrain myself from crying or strangling him.

"Hey man," Dustin says, "lay off him. Steve is just trying his best -"

"And now she's crying," Mike points out.

"Ok, we can fix this." I stand up and start pacing the small area of the cabin, weaving my way in a track around the furniture crammed in there. "Um, we can totally fix this - just gotta think of something -"

"Mike could always just show her." Dustin waggles his eyebrows but the joke falls flat and we glare him into throwing his hands up in surrender. "Jesus, just an idea... you guys really need a sense of humor..."

"I mean, if you think my death is funny. You can do a whole routine at my funeral -"

"The Chief won't kill you. El won't let him." Dustin sighs and leans back on the couch. I'm still pacing, wondering what to do to fix this ridiculous situation. Mike is staring at the closed bedroom door like a forlorn puppy left on the side of the highway.

They're pathetic. I'm pathetic. I'm going to give in, because I can't stand the awkward silence or the quiet, muffled sobs coming from her room.

"I hate you all," I comment without any real gumption, and then I breathe deep and glance at Dustin. "Tell my Mother I hate her. You can have my stereo, when I'm executed."

I hate stupid. When everyone knows something I don't and act like I can't handle knowledge. Not stupid. I can handle it. Whatever it is, I always handle it. Papa, the lab and the experiments, being alone in the woods in the freezing cold. I kill people. I know more than they know that I know.

Orgasms must be really, really bad. If it makes them all look at me like that. Maybe Joyce was confused. I get confused sometimes too. Maybe she didn't mean orgasm but something that sounds like orgasm. I am bad with rhymes but working on it, just like everything else. It's a game that Max and I play sometimes, when it's just us and the silence grows between us and she gets that look on her face like someone is pinching her, or like when she got a sliver. Hurt but more... not comfortable.

Maybe Max knows what an orgasm is. But I don't want to ask her, in case it makes her face Red and she gets angry like the boys.

Mike never acts like this when I ask him questions. He goes slow, helps me sound words out, lets me look in the dictionary or tells me in smaller words. He's like a dictionary for the world - he tells me what it means when Lucas and Dustin stare at each other with their eyebrows raised, like they are talking without words, that that means they're disagreeing. They disagree a lot.

That's why I cried. It hurts when Mike makes me feel stupid. Because he's the only one that never does.

I'm wiping the tears off my face when my bedroom door opens and I'm surprised to see Steve standing there, hands in the pockets of his gray Member's Only jacket that he wears so often.

"You're killing me, Eleven. Seriously." He gives me a look that I can't quite read - one side of his mouth curves up and his eyebrows are pitched together. He is all floppy brown hair and pretty skin. I know why Nancy liked him. "So, I'm going to tell you what an -" he lowers his voice to a loud whisper, "orgasm is but I swear to god of your dad

finds out-"

"Hopper is not my father." Why would he insult him that way?

"Whatever. Get off the floor, you're making me feel bad." I follow his order and pull myself onto my bedspread. Quilt. That is what it's called.

Steve walks in a circle, hands kind of flying around, he stops and points at me, then shakes his head and walks in a circle some more.

"Ok, so. An orgasm is the result of sex. It's like, how you know it's finished. So, the penis is in the vagina-"

"Pussy," I remark, and his eyes get Big and he nods.

"Sure. Ok. Whatever." He shakes his head and has a little smile. "So after a while, it sort of feels like, too good. And it's like... it's like falling off a cliff. Over an edge. In a good way. And then the boy has semen which comes out when he orgasms, and that's where the sperm is. And the sperm goes in the chick, and that's how babies are made."

None of this makes sense and I feel like he's teasing me. "I'm not stupid."

"Eleven. Seriously. Ask Mike. Or Jesus, even ask Hopper. I'm not lying."

I eye him, unsure.

"It feels really, really good. But it's something you only do with someone you love... someone that loves you." He tugs on his hair like he does when he's over-whelmed. Like when we are all at Hopper's, loud and rambunctious and too much for him to handle and he starts calling us shitheads. "Or when you masturbate, I guess. I've heard girls do that but like, I'm not really sure. Know what, just don't worry about that. Ok!" He claps his hands together and flashes that big smile - another reason I'm sure Nancy fell in love with him. "We good?"

"Good." I stand and wipe my face and Steve seems like he might fall

down, the way his body sort of crumples and he smiles.

"Thank God. Wheeler was about to murder me."

"He would not." I can't imagine Mike hurting someone unless they were deserving.

"No, not literally - we gotta work in your conversation skills." He shakes his head then opens the door, his hand movements telling me to go first so I do. I smile small at Mike who is still pink but returns the gesture.

"So, now that that's over with..." Dustin grabs his backpack and unzips it, rummaging around until he pulls out a rectangular box. There is a shark on it. "Movie time? Yeah?"

"Yes," I agree with a nod. It takes a moment to get the VCR setup, drinks and snacks and settle on the couch, but I'm beside Mike and his pinky brushes mine and I feel that warm, fluttery feeling in my stomach and wonder, is orgasm better than this?

Which reminds me of another word that Steve said. I chew my lip but I can't place it. Whispering into Mike's ear, I ask, "What is masturbate?"

Mike spits his soda everywhere.

Maybe I am stupid.



## 4. Why Me

Mike turns a dark crimson color and starts to choke on his soda. I watch with Big eyes as he tries to get his breath and Dustin shoots him a glare over his shoulder like he's doing it on purpose. When Mike gets himself together, eyes Red and watery, his voice is scratchy.

"Where do you keep coming up with this stuff?" he whispers in my ear and the warm breath tickles my skin and makes my body tingle everywhere. Like when we kiss... but different, too.

"Steve said -"

"I hate that idiot."

"He's nice," I argue. "He tells me things you won't."

"Well that's just great." He sounds upset and his eyes won't meet mine. A for sure sign that he's upset. I touch his arm, trying to tell him that I'm confused and unsure and nervous because Mike never gets mad at me. Annoyed, and impatient, and flustered. I had to look all these words up to know what he meant. But they didn't mean mad. Mad is bad.

"Mike..."

Sighing and dropping his head to the back of the sofa, Mike mutters under his breath and I can't understand what he says but I like to watch his soft lips move. I wonder what they would feel like on my skin... other than my mouth.

My body feels strange lately. There is a different kind of electricity that travels under my skin. Not the same as when I can move things or see people or that kind of stuff. This seems to target the middle of my body, my stomach and lower, but not like my "monthly" which is painful and unpleasant. This feeling is warm and soft and nice and it only happens around and about Mike. Is this Love?

In love. Like Nancy and Jonathan, or Mrs. Byers and Hop. Though, I

don't think they know that I know about that. But I can hear them when they think I'm asleep, sharing cigarettes and soft laughter and softer words and looks...

"Eleven." Mike rarely calls me by my full name, so I stop looking at his lips and meet his eyes. They are deep, dark pools and I would know them anywhere. I can tell everything about how Mike feels by his eyes. They are pretty. "I will tell you what it means... later. Tonight, on the Supercomm. It's not something you discuss in front of other people... it's private. For us."

"A secret?" Mike nods and I smile. I love secrets with Mike because it's special and for only us and that makes me feel soft and warm and hot at the same time. "I have more questions," I add.

"Of course you do." His voice sounds annoyed but his mouth curves into a smile and I lay my head on his shoulder, satisfied for now.

/Steve/

Hopper comes home around six, a little later than normal which makes Eleven glare at the radio until he does his fancy knock. Using her powers, she unlocks the door and the big man, intimidating in his uniform and hat, shuffles in. One look at the kids and I has him grumbling under his breath and moving to the fridge.

"Go home, guys. It's dinner time," Hopper says, and the boys and I do just that. We all ignore the quick kiss that Eleven gives Mike, who is beat Red and grimacing before flying out the door.

Out of babysitterly duty, a misplaced sense of responsibility or deathwish, I hang back. Hopper looks like he's about to tell me to fuck off but I find myself saying, "Eleven asked me what sex was today."

Silence, though I can basically see his blood pressure rising like the mercury in a thermometer. "Huh."

"I kept it to the basics... um, the general mechanics, can't do it til she can drive, only with someone who loves her." I can't meet his eyes so I stare at the floorboards and shift anxiously. "But um, I just thought I

should tell you, sir..."

The Chief makes a strange strangled noise. He nods. Takes a long swig from the beer on his hand.

"Ok."

That's it? No threat of bodily harm? No handcuffs and sirens and my mother crying on the police station? I chance a look up at him, and he's staring at his daughter as she straightens up her friend's' mess and hums under her breath. Hopper's face is red like I've never seen and his expression is unreadable.

"Well then, I'm just gonna... go..."

"I thought I had more time," Hop mutters before scrubbing a hand over his face and shaking his head. "She's still so... innocent."

"Can't keep her in a plastic bubble," I reply with a shrug. "Plus, she overheard Mrs. Byers saying she missed it, so you can't even blame the kids. Wanted to um - know if we could get it for her. Like a gift." I try not to laugh at the way his nostrils flare and his eyebrows nearly disappear into his hairline. Poor guy. Probably gonna have a heart attack some day. Dipshit kids and their crazy antics. I personally would fight a million Darts rather than have this conversation again. Or any of the sensitive talks again. I'd rather watch Jonathan and Nancy -

Something pangs in my chest and I flip my hair out of my eyes before patting the Chief on the arm. Maybe, instead of going into insurance, I'll try to get into the police program. I'm certain Hopper knows he owes me.

"Well, see ya tomorrow," I say before jogging down the steps to my car, where Dustin and Mike are waiting. "No way. You bike here, you bike home."

"No, that's not it," Mike says with a sassy eye roll.

"We actually had a question..." Dustin has the gall to look bashful, which makes me nervous. This kid will ask me anything, with no shame, so this is probably not good. However, I'm also feeling

generous, because we bonded a bit over all of this nonsense.

I realize that Eleven has a way of bringing us all together, and that makes a little piece of ice that has hardened around my heart in the months since Nancy and I split chip away. She really is amazing. A giant pain in my ass, but amazing. And scary.

Mike Wheeler sure has some balls.

"What?" I don't hide my exasperation and the boys share a look. Leaves crunch under their feet as they shift around uncomfortably, and then Dustin blurts out, "Do girls really masturbate?" His lisp comes out when he's anxious and it's in full swing now.

"Uhhh..."

"Eleven asked. Now I have to explain that to her? I don't even - she doesn't get how - like, why me?" Mike drops his head pathetically and I chuckle.

"Doesn't your dad have Playboys or something?" I raked a hand through my hair and jingle my keys impatiently.

"Have you met my dad?" Mike deadpans. He's got a point. "And I'm not gonna look at dirty magazines with El. That's - not somethings that I could handle." The poor kid would probably die of arousal or embarrassment, likely both, but I understand. We've been through the shittiest of times together, the end of the world a few times over and mullet-sporting thugs. It's easy to forget that they're so young - though at times it's also impossible to forget.

This one, I have no answer for. I never actually asked a girl if they did, because a) it would ruin the moment or whatever chance I had, and b) I wasn't going to risk having the reputation of asking about that sort of thing and becoming a school freak. Rolling my eyes, I say, "put your bikes in the trunk. We'll discuss it in the car." Quickly they follow my order and I plop down in the front seat and meet my own gaze in the rear view mirror.

I'm never having children.

## 5. Together

That night, I can tell Hopper has something on his mind. He's acting differently. Not bad, or mad, or sad. But like he wants to tell me something and he's unsure how to do it. We have grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup, one of my favorite meals, and then I have school work to get busy with. I'm not too far away from being caught up to the boys. I've been working hard.

Before I disappear into my bedroom, Hopper clears his throat. "Kid, I uh- we gotta talk." His face looks red and pinched.

"Yes?"

"Steve told me that you uh, you had some questions for him today." Chief is standing at the sink, soap up to his elbows. He's changed into his "around the house" clothes. He gives me a tight grin and I sense I know what's coming.

"Yes. But he told me it's - pirate." We both frown and I know it's not the right word but close. "Private." I nod.

His smile is brief. "I just wanted to say... if you had more questions, you could ask me. Or Joyce. You know she's always happy to help you."

I nod, considering. But Mike said that it was a secret, between him and I. I want something that is just for the two of us, but I remember his pink face and the struggle he had trying to answer me. He was uncomfortable but he said he would help. Maybe, if I just ask Hopper one little question, I can save the rest for him.

"Steve said..." I try to find my words and Hopper huffs a noise. I know he likes Steve, though he likes to pretend he doesn't. Hopper likes to pretend not to like anyone, like everyone is a big buzzing mosquito to him that is on his nerves. But I can tell that he is just pretending, because I've seen how he is when he really doesn't like someone. He can use his words like the bullets in his gun.

"Steve said that sex is to make babies, but also for fun. It doesn't

sound fun," I add thoughtfully. "But sometimes, I..." I feel my face scrunch up as I try to think of the way my body feels when Mike kisses me. When he really kisses me, with tongues and hands in my waist. Those are my favorite and leave me breathless.

"Sometimes I feel like exploding." I guess that's close enough. Hopper stares at me, speechless. Maybe that's not right? "I get these tingles -"

"Yup. I got it." He purses his lips and stares at his hands on the table. It's silent for a long time and I feel like I should have just waited to talk to Mike.

"Mike told me he will answer my questions, if you don't want to." I'm turning around to go to my room when Hop makes a strange noise. I glance at him to find his face is bright red, like a tomato.

"Sex is for making babies. It's a way for two people to show they love each other more than anyone else, ok? And it's more than just two bodies joining... it's about love." He sighs and looks confused. "No one gets to touch you without you telling them it's ok. If some jackass put his hands on you, I give full permission for you to rip him in half."

I can't help but giggle.

"Including Wheeler. He ever does anything you don't want him to..."

"I think Mike is scared," I say. "Scared of parents."

"Well thank God one of you is." Hopper half-smiles. "I know your hormones are raging, and your - body," he gestured one hand up and down at me, "might think it's ready for stuff but.. it's not. You're not. I'm sure as hell not."

"Steve said I have to wait, too. Until I can drive."

"Well he's right. You could wait even longer." Hopper leans back in the rickety chair and looks at me for a long time. I can tell there is a lot going on in his mind. I decide to save my other questions for Mike.

I'm laying in bed when the Supercomm squeaks. Rolling on my side, I pluck it up and turn the volume down. Would definitely not want my

mom to catch me on it and get grounded again.

"Mike? Are you there?"

"Hey El. Over." She always forgets to say "over," but I don't mind.

"Are you asleep?" She asks. I smile and think of her, snuggled up under the covers in her bedroom. I wonder what her pajamas look like.

"No, I'm talking to you. What's up?"

"Hopper knows about our special talk today," she says. Like she's talking about the weather. Instantly I feel my stomach drop to my knees and my heart jump into my throat. I'm dead. The Chief already doesn't care for me - something I suspect is completely related to me dating his kind-of daughter - but this is even worse. I should start my will.

"W-what'd he say? Over."

"That if you touch me and I don't want you to, I can rip you in half." I hear the smile in her voice. Glad she finds this amusing... I roll my eyes to myself and sigh.

"Well, if I ever do something you don't like, all you have to do is tell me. Over." Bloodshed isn't necessary.

"I like when you touch me. Mike, I like it too much." Her voice sounds worried but I can't help the flutter in my stomach at her words. I know exactly what she means. When we kiss, I never want it to end. It's like the electricity before a storm, I get goosebumps and the hair on the back of my neck stands up. I'm not sure if it's like this for everyone, but I'd like to think it's just her. She's special in every way.

I clear my throat and mentally tell myself to calm down. "Did you ask Hopper any more questions? Over."

"I was saving them for you."

"Oh, ok. I'm not sure how much help I can be. I don't know this stuff

either, El. Over." If only I had spent more time listening in health class, instead of staring at my shoes and pretending not to die of embarrassment. Maybe I could ask Nancy - nothing specific. Just to help El.

"It's like dancing," El says, and I frown. She's lost me. "At the Snow Ball. We'll learn together."

I am reminded again why I love this amazing girl. Smiling in the darkness, I say, "yeah El, I'd like that. Together."

Sweet, short, not so much funny. I kinda feel like it could end here... but we will see. Let me know what you think and if you'd like more! I'm running out of ideas.

I've mentioned before, but I'm writing on my phone which is difficult and frustrating. Any mistakes are my own! If you have any one-shot ideas you'd like to read, send them my way!



## 6. Steve's Big Date

Hey all! Just a quick brotp scene with two of my faves. Maybe a bit of plot? We shall see. As always, let me know what you think!

and please, please check out my newest story, Mixtape!

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"Good afternoon, Ms Henderson," I hear Steve as he breezes into the house. More often than not, Harrington finds his way to my house, the excuses always vary. Giving me a ride to school, to the arcade, wanting to see a movie but no one to go with - it's kind of sad. I don't mind, of course - Steve Harrington is the king of cool. Girls melt into puddles of sloppy, dreamy smiles and gushy sighs whenever he's around. But I can't help but feel badly. Ever since Nancy picked Jonathan "I'm so mysterious and sensitive and I hate Top 40 music" Byers over him, Steve has been... Lonely.

"Steve! Goodness, look at you! What's the occasion?" My Mom is one of those gushy, sappy messes around him too. I think it's the hair. And the smile. And, ya know, the fact that he's always polite and acts like she's the best cook in the known universe (she's ok, but not / that/ good, and her "secret" potato salad recipe is total bull shit - she buys it from the store and dumps it into Tupperware). None of that hurts his case either.

I pat Yurtle absently on the shell and head into the living room, where Steve is scratching Mews Two behind the ears and Mom fusses over them both. I think she likes that Steve soaks up her mom-type affection. Though he's never said anything outright, I think his parents are kind of absent. Kind of shitty.

"Whoa," I say, taking in my friend. Because that's what we are, I think. Ever since he helped me with Dart, and then everything else / after/ that, plus everything in between. Steve doesn't make me feel like the Toothless Wonder I used to be, or the dumb kid brother of his girlfriend - ex girlfriend. I /still/ don't get that, but Mom always says, "the heart wants what the heart wants."

Whatever /that/ means.

Steve is wearing dark slacks, loafers, and a light green sweater that brings out his eyes, a black leather jacket over that. His hair is strategically messy thanks to Farrah Fawcett spray and his Ray Band are perched on top of his head. He looks snazzier than usual.

"I have a date," Steve announces. Mom gasps and clutches her chest, her excitement dramatic and contagious. I imitate her.

"Steve, I'm so unprepared! You could give a guy some warning," I joke, and he chuckles, lifting a hand to ruffle my frizzy brown hair.

"You wish, Henderson. It's with a /girl/, thank you very much." If he's nervous, I can't tell - and I'm probably the best of anyone I know at reading people.

"What's her name? Is she from Hawkins? What's her parents do?" Mom is full of questions and I can see Steve foundering for answers. I intervene.

"Mom, give the guy a break. C'mon," I say, and lead Steve back to my bedroom. It's a mess, and Yurtle is maybe two inches from where I left him. I step over my tortoise and move to make room on my bed, sweeping clothes and books and Three Musketeers wrappers onto the ground unceremoniously. Steve stands in the doorway, looking like it's physically paining him not to make a comment, but he purses his lips into a firm line and enters my domain.

"Sorry about Claudia," I say. I rarely call her Mom when she's not around. "She's just... enthusiastic." I roll my eyes and smirk. "So, who is the mystery girl?"

At this, Steve grows awkward. "She's not my normal type," he says carefully, like he's choosing the words purposely.

"So what? Is she like, really ugly?"

"No!" Steve exclaims. His hands card through his hair and he jumps up from the bed, pacing the small clear space on my carpet. "She's like, gorgeous. Not like any girl I've ever seen before! And she's so /cool/, she's totally out of my league. I don't even know what I'm

going to say to her!"

I feel my jaw unhinge in surprise. Steve Harrington, king of cool, best looking guy I know in real life? This nervous for a /date/? I am shocked. I am dumbfounded. And then I'm laughing because what, she has to be Brooke Shields or something to throw him off his game this much.

"Nice. After everything I've done for you? Ungrateful shit." Steve kicks my sneaker and I have to hold my belly I'm cracking up so much.

"No, it's just - I've never met anyone like her! She's says what's on her mind. She has purple /hair/ and she's so freaking cool, kid. Like, she's just..." his brown gaze stares off into the distance.

Purple hair? That's definitely different than Nancy Wheeler, who dresses more like Nancy Reagan than Cyndi Lauper. Nancy /is/ kind of a badass now, despite the fact that she dresses like a librarian. I can admit that, even though I still feel betrayed for Steve. Girl dropped him like a hot potato and barely acknowledged it.

"So, why are you here? I mean, what can I do?" I'm big enough to admit that I am not on the coolest people list of Hawkins, Indiana. Steve had helped me through my own girl troubles, was the best at giving advice and pep talks. And apparently sex talks, too. But I'm not sure what I could possibly offer him in this time of need.

"I need a pep talk. So, you know - do your thing, Henderson."

I feel a flicker of warm affection in my chest. Scaredy-cat Steve came to /me/ for this? It's like ending a campaign with everyone intact. It's like dancing with Nancy at the Snow Ball. My heart feels bigger than my chest and I grin stupidly at his ridiculously good looking, albeit worried, face.

"All right, man. You're gonna walk in there -"

"I'm picking her up," Steve interrupts, hands on his hips.

"Ok, so you're gonna pick her up. You're gonna open her door and play it cool."

"What if she's a feminist? They don't like when you do that."

"Steve!" I exclaim, exasperated. Was I this difficult when he's building me up?

"Sorry, Sorry." He motions for me to continue.

"You're gonna open the door because that's what gentleman do. You're gonna charm her panties off, just smile and don't talk about Nancy, or how your best friend is fourteen -"

"Don't mention you shits, got it." He nods and his brow furrows like he's literally making a mental list.

"You're gonna take her for food or something. You look like a million bucks. She's gonna be putty in your hands, dude. And then, you're gonna take her home. I don't know about the kissing part, but I'm sure you can figure that out on your own. You're gonna knock her socks off!" I'm rambling but Steve is nodding along with me until a big smile breaks over his face.

"Yeah. Yeah," he says, nodding eagerly. "I'm just gonna be like, 'Kali, I know you're fine as hell and too cool for me, but I will move heaven and Earth to make your day.' Huh?" He sticks his tongue between his teeth and wiggles his eyebrows.

I frown. "Maybe tone it down a bit."

"Ok. Yeah." He slaps his hands together and jumps in place a couple times, like a boxer readying for a fight. "Thanks, kid. I gotta jet." I follow him out, and he waves bye to my mother before jogging down the drive to his BMW. I lean in the open passenger window as he plops down and buckles his seatbelt.

"So, ask this Kali if she has a younger sister, huh?" I purr and he glares.

"What've I told you about that?"

"Good luck, dude." I stand back and jam my hands in my pants pockets, watching him pull away with a salute. It's nice to know that even King Steve gets nervous, I think as I turn and trudge back inside.

I wish him good luck, and know that I'll hear all about it the next time I see him.